

XLIV.—*On the East-African Representative of the Bongo and its Generic Position.* By OLDFIELD THOMAS, F.R.S.

FOR some years the presence of a large Tragelaphine antelope in the district of the Ravine Station, British East Africa, has been recorded, and guesses made as to its identity with species known elsewhere. In 1897 Mr. F. J. Jackson sent home a pair of horns, with certain native information about them which now proves to be remarkably correct; and these horns were figured by Mr. Selater in the 'Proceedings of the Zoological Society'*, with the suggestion that they might be the horns of *T. Angasi*.

Now at last the mystery is cleared up by Mr. F. W. Isaac, who has obtained through the natives, and presented to the National Museum, a remarkably fine series of this antelope, which proves to be not the Inyala, but a close ally of the Bongo, hitherto only recorded from West Africa.

The most noteworthy point about Mr. Isaac's series is the definite proof they give that this animal, belonging to a group with the females normally hornless, has long horns in that sex—a character fully of generic importance. Gray's distinction of the genus "*Euryceros*" †, supported alone of recent writers by Dr. Jentink, therefore proves to have been correct. But the name *Euryceros*, being preoccupied ‡, will require to be changed, and I would suggest that of *Boocercus*, based on the characteristic bovine tail of *B. eurycerus*.

No evidence as yet exists as to whether the true western Bongo has horns in the female, no examples of that sex, horned or hornless, being in any European museum. But should it prove, contrary to all probability, that there are no horns in the West-African females, I would expressly assign as the type of the genus *Boocercus* the East-African form which we know to possess them.

This East-African form, so far as there is western material for comparison with Mr. Isaac's fine set, appears to be very closely allied to the true Bongo, but may be subspecifically distinguished as follows:—

Boocercus eurycerus Isaaci, subsp. n.

Closely similar to the true *B. eurycerus*. Size very large; skull of male considerably larger and heavier than that of the type form (see measurements below), strongly convex above,

* P. Z. S. 1897, p. 455.

† P. Z. S. 1850, p. 144.

‡ Lesson, Cent. Zool. p. 217 (1830).

with much arched frontals and swollen nasals. Tooth-row about half an inch longer than in the ally. Bony projections on base of skull between anterior end of bullæ much larger and more prolonged—in *B. eurycerus* they do not extend backwards between the bullæ at all. Bullæ larger, rounder, and more inflated, those of the female still more developed than those of the male.

Horns of male very thick and massive, apparently decidedly thicker at all ages than in true *eurycerus*; the angles rounded and but little marked; the surface rough and coarse, not worn smooth, as is commonly the case in the allied form; dark blackish brown, the tips white. Horns of female proportionally rather longer than in the male, slender, rounded, more closely twisted than in the male, and with about half a turn more; their general direction more nearly parallel to each other, about as in the Lesser Kudu.

Markings quite as in the typical form, but the general colour seems to be a stronger and richer fulvous. Muzzle prominently black. Dorsal line, from the withers backwards, marked with black, except where the continuations of the lateral vertical lines cut it with white. White flank-lines about ten to thirteen in number.

Measurements of the typical skull (σ):—

Basal length 394 millim.; greatest breadth 167; top of nasals from palate 137; nasals 148×52 ; muzzle to orbit 235; muzzle to front of anterior premolar 123; palate length 223; combined length of three premolars 51, of tooth-row 126.

Horns: length round curves 870 millim. ($=34\frac{1}{4}$ inches); in straight line 725 millim. ($=28\frac{1}{2}$ inches); circumference at base 286 millim. ($=11\frac{1}{4}$ inches); greatest spread (outside) 455 millim. ($=18$ inches).

A female skull has a basal length of 350 millim., and its horns measure 686 millim. ($=27$ inches) round the curves, 615 millim. ($=24\frac{1}{4}$ inches) in a straight line, with a basal circumference of 177 millim. ($=7$ inches) and a greatest spread of only 227 millim. ($=9$ inches).

Hab. Eldoma Ravine, British East Africa. In deep forest.

Type. Adult male. Collected April 1902, and presented by F. W. Isaac, Esq.

Mr. Isaac is to be congratulated on the satisfactory way in which he has cleared up the problems in connexion with this magnificent inhabitant of our East-African territories.